

DRAMA

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July MCMXXIX

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OF THEATRICAL TERMS,
COMPILED BY W. G. FAY ▯
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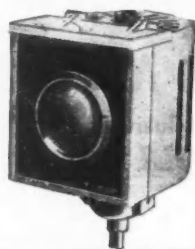
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DRAMA

VOL. VII

JULY MCMXXIX

NUMBER 10

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

By J. T. Grein

AS usual the theatre has a bad time during the election month; it always has when the nation is agitated by current events. A good many plays have come, failed and gone. Others doing fairly well until the ballot-box drew nigh, died from sudden anæmia of the box-office—one London theatre, despite a star-cast, played to weekly receipts of £90 . . . ! Nor is the crop that weathered the apathy a large one; but quality made up for quantity and in May at least, four plays saw the light and conquered their place in the sun, that well deserved it. I refer to "Keepers of Youth" by Arnold Ridley; "The Matriarch" by G. B. Stern; the ingenious, amusing English version of "La Vie Parisienne" of Offenbach by A. P. Herbert and "Rope" by that very young and whimsical dramatist, Patrick Hamilton; while, at Wyndham's we had a noteworthy revival of St. John Ervine's "Jane Clegg" coupled with Euripides' "Medea," in both of which the Cassons-Lewis and Sybil Thorndike, acted magnificently and spelled the audience by their versatility and their stupendous memory.

I would rapidly refer to the now habitual success of Tom Walls, Ralph Lynn and Mary Brough in Ben Travers' merry, mad medley, "A Cup of Kindness"—the quinquennial of this author's inventiveness and partnership with his trio of irresistible comedians; to Audrey Scott's play "Why drag in Marriage," a flippant, sometimes witty, sometimes very artificial "comédie de mœurs"—mostly

equivocal, in which Miss Gillian Lind made a great hit as a most accomplished ingénue; and to Edgar Wallace's best play so far—"Persons Unknown" which contains a complete and amusing revelation of how Scotland Yard works indoors and at large.

But to revert to the plays that matter. "The Matriarch," Miss Stern's adaptation of her momentous novel, "The Tents of Israel," betrays her novitiate as a playwright, but barring structural faults, it describes intensely and dramatically an angle of Jewish life with great fidelity and in outstanding characterisation of two leading characters—the Matriarch herself, a flamboyant, imposing personality, and the financier who reveals to her the ruin of her family. Mrs. Patrick Campbell is simply superb in her minute, profound, brilliant delineation of the Matriarch. She might be of the Race. She understands Jewish character in all its phases—she is in turn imperious, severe, flippant, ubiquitous, loquacious, but heart and pride are the keynotes of her complex creation. In her record "The Matriarch" will shine and live as a histrionic masterpiece.

"Rope" with its dangerous and rather unpleasant donnée founded on the Loeb case—in which two students kill a friend for the sake of sensation and experimentalism—develops as a penetrating study of conscience breaking down under the inquisitorial circumstantial evidence which impels the murderers to confess deed and

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

motives in minute detail. It is written by a budding dramatist, who has stagecraft at his fingers' ends, and knows a great deal about criminology and the psychology of criminals and who commingles bright and drab dialogue with great dexterity.

Last but not least "Keepers of Youth," a powerful indictment of private schools and their teachers, by one who has experienced these, has among great qualities and obvious veracity, the fault that it bears the unmistakable impress

of "tendency," that it means attack and in order to render it effective loads the scales. But for all that it remains a most stimulating work of an original mind, fearless of uttering without flummery or veneer what he believed clamoured for ventilation and discussion in the open. It has also the advantage of being admirably acted by a band of artists who in this season of many strangers within our gates, would prove to them that some of our ensembles are second to none in the world.

THE END OF A CHAPTER

THE tenth anniversary of the foundation of the British Drama League was celebrated by a dinner at the New Prince's Restaurant, on Friday evening, June 28, and although, in the nature of things, not more than a small proportion of our members could be present, it is only right that the event should be noticed in this month's issue of DRAMA.

Looking back, as one inevitably does on such an occasion, one is reminded of the very small, the very frail origins of the League, and of the extremely "speculative" conditions under which its somewhat grandiloquent prospectus was first launched upon the world in the summer of 1918. As human institutions go, the League, in wealth and numbers, must still rank but modestly. Nevertheless, it has substantiated its claim to speak and to act on behalf of a general movement in the theatre which is recognized as no mean one, and among its members are to be found almost all those men and women who have notably worked in the service of the ideals for which the League stands.

I will not here attempt a definition of what precisely these ideals are. But their nature must be patent to anyone

who has followed the story of the League's development as recorded from month to month in the pages of this magazine.

The Drama League has, in fact, few dogmas to its credit (or discredit), while the activities of its members are so various and manifold, that to a cynical observer they might appear, at moments, almost mutually exclusive. Yet we are glad that, even at the risk of inconsistency, the League has made it possible for the Lion of the Commercial Theatre to lie down with the Lamb of the Village Institute, while countless instances of co-operation between individuals of widely different aim or status are among the most delightful incidents of work in and for the League.

If this spirit can be maintained and fostered, our future should be worthy of our past. The League may well congratulate itself on the accomplishment of its first decade, but its real work will remain undone while the stage—professional and amateur—still struggles for that position in the Community which must be achieved if ever the art of the theatre is to give of its best for our instruction and delight.

THE MECHANISATION OF ART

A letter addressed to the Chairman of the British National Committee
of Intellectual Co-operation

Dear Sir,

I am instructed by the Council of the British Drama League to approach you in regard to the possibility of bringing to the notice of the Committee for Intellectual Co-operation in Paris, the subject of the Mechanisation of Art as being a problem which could profitably come within the scope of enquiry by the League of Nations.

The phrase "Mechanisation of Art" covers the use of mechanical methods to reproduce or broadcast various forms of artistic creation, and the reason why the British Drama League feels moved to bring up the matter is that the contemporary theatre is being profoundly affected by such agencies as the film and wireless, and in a manner which in our view, demands analysis. Clearly, the problem also includes the art of Music, and while actually ourselves concerned most closely with the theatre, we should hope that any enquiry which might be instituted would include equal treatment of the musical side.

The Mechanisation of Art is, of course, no new thing. The art of printing is itself an example of mechanical methods used to reproduce the written word. Similarly, photography and colour printing have been utilised to reproduce the work of painters, sculptors and architects. We would not suggest that these older examples of Mechanisation should come within the scope of the enquiry, if only that in such cases Mechanisation is applied to the reproduction of inanimate or static physical objects rather than to the reproduction of living or dynamic forms and sounds.

The enquiry we suggest would fall, naturally, under two heads. (1) The artistic aspect, including the effect of Mechanised Art on the creative artist and on the audience; (2) The economic aspect, i.e., the consequences of Mechanised Art in respect of wage-earning, transference of capital, labour, etc.

(1) *The Artistic Aspect*: If a play is broadcast the actor has no personal con-

tact with his audience, and the members of that audience have no psychological contact with each other. The words, too, of a drama are preserved in a broadcast performance, but its action is lost. What is the effect of this on artists and on audiences?

In the film drama, on the other hand, action was till recently the only thing of importance. Words were non-existent: but new mechanical developments will now allow spoken words to be produced simultaneously with action. Will the reaction of audiences to talking films be at all comparable with the reaction to living actors, and can poetical drama in any real sense be transmitted by mechanical methods? The tendency of the film has so far been more and more towards a type of drama which it was impossible to produce in the human theatre. If this continues, what will be the effect on the future appreciation of the dramatic masterpieces of the past, and will it definitely discourage the creation of dramatic masterpieces in the future? And what effect will the very special and peculiar technique of film acting have upon the actor's gift of sustained and emotional interpretation on the human stage?

With regard to Music, it must be admitted that better broadcasting and the gramophone have done much to spread the wider appreciation of music of all kinds, but at the same time the sense of personal contact and corporate enjoyment is lost. Under the present conditions is there a risk that the standard of tone quality and of finer shades of expression may be lowered? In any case, may not the fact that Mechanised Art is obliged to address itself to the widest possible public entail a general lowering of all artistic values?

(2) *Economic Aspect*: The increase of mechanical reproduction and transmission has already come very seriously into competition with the human theatre, and the future possibilities of the talking film, etc., cannot be estimated. Is it a fact that in

THE MECHANISATION OF ART

many countries the best actors are drawn away from the theatre by the higher salaries offered by the cinema? And is it true that in certain districts theatre managers, whether dependent on touring companies or resident repertory companies, have found it difficult to keep their theatres open at all?

As regards Music, the economic situation is even more difficult. In England, orchestras of the highest class cannot maintain their existence by concert-giving unless they are at the same time engaged for broadcasting or for the making of gramophone records. There are signs that music may become very largely dependent on these agencies, and even assuming that their artistic policy is in every way praiseworthy, what will be the effect if all private initiative in music should be stifled? The future of the films which reproduce music mechanically is at present unknown, but the development of these may possibly tend to thousands of orchestral musicians being thrown out of work.

It may be argued that modern mechanical appliances, like the invention of printing in the past, are undoubtedly bringing about a steadily increasing demand for drama and for music in some form or another, and that as long as this increasing demand is maintained there can be no danger of dramatic and musical art passing out of existence. But there is the danger of industrial disorganisation, present, probably, to a greater or less degree in all European countries, and though this be adjusted, the artistic problem will remain. Is not the whole subject, therefore, one that would repay enquiry? Such an enquiry, instituted by the League of Nations, would obviously be the most comprehensive one possible. A report embodying the experience and views of all the countries concerned would be helpful to each one.

My Council would, therefore, be very grateful if you would give your favourable consideration to this proposal, and if, should you approve of it, you would forward it to the proper quarters.

I am, Yours faithfully,

(Signed) GEOFFREY WHITWORTH
Secretary British Drama League

THE NATIONAL THEATRE AND THE ELECTION

AS a result of an influentially signed circular, which was sent out from the Drama League just before the Election, candidates in over fifty divisions were asked to pledge themselves to support "a reasonable grant for a National Theatre if and when the question is raised in the next Parliament." For the most part their replies indicated a spirit of benevolence. Among successful candidates there are several who evinced a real interest and desire to help. These names, needless to say, have been carefully noted.

Supporters of the National Theatre idea were to be found in every party, but it is only fair to publish the following letter which may be taken as typical of the general reaction to the enquiry from the constituencies approached by our members.

DEAR SIR,

1. In accordance with your circular, "The Theatre and the Election," I this week, at public meetings held in Loughton, put the following question to the three candidates:—

"Can the candidate give a pledge to support a reasonable grant for a National Theatre if, and when, this question is raised in the next Parliament?"

with the following results.

2. (a) *Winston Churchill* (Conservative) replied that while in sympathy with the arts there would be no funds available for such a purpose—or words to that effect. The audience (mainly Conservative) received the question and answer with laughter.
- (b) *Granville Sharp* (Liberal) replied that he thought he could say yes. The audience (mainly Liberal) received the question and answer in silence.
- (c) *Newbold* (Labour) replied emphatically, "Yes," and devoted five minutes to explaining the need for a National Theatre and for National Opera. The audience (mainly Labour) received the question and answer with applause.

3. Conclusions.

- (a) The Labour member was the only one of the three candidates who had given thought to the question before it was put to him.
- (b) The Labour audience was the only one alive to the fact that a National Theatre would aid the culture of the people.

Yours sincerely,

VINCENT NELLO,
Loughton Play Reading Circle. Hon. Director



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A YEAR OF SCOTTISH DRAMA

By Donald Sutherland

THE season 1928-29 has not brought forth any very outstanding play in Scotland. Its encouraging feature has been the great increase of good work among lesser Dramatic Clubs, largely due to the influence of the Community Drama Festival, which now stands upon firm foundations. The season of the Scottish National Theatre Society was anything but distinguished and, speaking generally, brought out two points very clearly: Firstly—that the movement suffers from lack of showmanship; this is very plain both from the choice of plays and the order in which they were presented: Secondly—indifferent sets and poor presentation. The acting itself has been excellent; indeed, the average standard has been surprisingly high. If the Play Reading Committee had as sound a sense of the theatre as the players themselves, we would have less reason to complain.

The first play presented was "The Coasts of India" by George Reston Malloch; this was unquestionably a good play. It had its faults in so far as it lacked any big climax. Instead we had a number of lesser climaxes, which meant that the interest of the audience flagged from time to time. It was a gloomy play dealing with the social decline of a wealthy manufacturing family and the ultimate surrender of the idealistic young daughter to the economic necessities of every-day life. In so far as the play was good, this Society deserved much credit for its presentation, but the point to be stressed is whether the S.N.T.S., in their present state, can afford to produce such plays. They have undoubtedly lost their old public and it seems they would be better advised to produce plays of a lighter and more attractive type to re-create the public they have lost. Once that public is definitely established, it will then be time enough for the occasional presentation of such a play. Certainly it was a mistake to open the season with a dismal "Scotland à la Russe" affair which could only have a very limited appeal.

They also gave us "The Flower in the Vase," a full length comedy by Mr. Cormack Simpson. Here we had weak drama but good characterisation and writing. Mr. Simpson failed to make the most of his opportunities and some of the situations were, owing to allusions to events which took place off the stage, distinctly vague. The play provided a pleasant evening's entertainment if nothing more, and drew good houses.

Later came a comedy by Donald McLaren, "It Looks Likes a Change." This was an interesting first play, slight of plot and somewhat rambling in construction. Here and there were passages of marked originality, but, owing to the fact that there was not one of the characters presented with whom one could feel really in sympathy, the play lost much of its effect—in other words, there was hardly an honest person on the stage. Two hours spent in an atmosphere of perpetual dishonesty and bad character, however amusing, is not altogether pleasant.

Finally, "The Mannoeh Family" by Murray McClymont, was revived. This is probably the best play in the repertoire. It was excellently acted and produced, but, largely owing to the indefinite qualities of the plays which preceded, it did not receive the support to which it was entitled. It has the merit of making an honest attempt to work out a difficult and dramatic situation, and gave Miss Elliot Mason an opportunity of showing us what a very fine actress she can be when she has a part suited to her talent.

The Festival has already been reviewed in DRAMA, and there can be no doubt that it brought out some very fine acting, but one did get exceedingly tired of what Mr. Ivor Brown described as "Cup and Saucer Courting." The "Locksmiths" No. 2 team took us away from the "But and Ben" with a very carefully produced version of the "Sire of Malestroit's Door." Generally speaking, a good deal more attention might be paid to original sets

A YEAR OF SCOTTISH DRAMA

and lighting. Invariably the standard of acting was very much higher than the presentation.

Of other amateur societies whose performances I have attended, the commonest mistake has been in attempting works beyond their range, and giving three act "drawing room" comedies where they would be much wiser to take simpler one act plays within the range of their experience, spending more time on rehearsal and less money on hired "drawing room" furniture scattered too lavishly about the "oak hall" set, provided by a local costumier.

The work of the Clarion Players and the Labour College Players deserves no small

praise; working under considerable difficulties both these clubs have produced interesting original work, and their performances give full evidence of meticulous rehearsal.

To sum up—Scottish Amateur Drama suffers badly from the scarcity of Scots playwrights. There is much talk of the Scottish Literary Renaissance—but less evidence of any live movement in this direction. Truth is that it is difficult to resurrect that which has never existed. In spite of Scottish Nationalism, in Literature and Drama, the Scot finds better entertainment in the works of more cultured nations, and is traditionally reluctant to spend his bawbees upon indifferent drama dressed in local dialect.

THE STAGE IN EUROPE TO-DAY

By Cloudesley Brereton, D.Litt.

Reprinted from *Paris et le Monde* which is conducting an International Symposium on the State of the Modern Theatre.

UNLIKE poetry or the pictorial arts, the theatre is always if anything behind the times. A Blake or a Turner can afford to work for an audience which consists entirely or largely of posterity. The playwright and still more the actor must play down to the intelligence of a contemporary audience, if they are to get an audience at all. The playwright in fact is a teacher rather than a prophet. Hence the theatre in Europe to-day necessarily represents the post-war spirit, with a certain number of pessimistic pre-war tendencies that the war seemed to justify. At its deepest and best it represents the general malaise of a stricken humanity, still suffering from "phobias" and taking a gloomy view of its health. Only perhaps in Germany where it takes the place of the pulpit, is it possibly like a popular preacher, not before its time, but up to date.

Even such advanced dramatists as Leormand and Pirandello represent the science of yesterday, while Bernard Shaw and Ibsen represent that of the day before. When science again becomes vital and hygienic, one may look for a general revival of the theatre. In Greece it was a true marriage between science and art (mankind did not live in compartments;) in the later part of the nineteenth century, the two thousand years' separation between them terminated in a liaison which still continues. Until art recovers les droits de la femme légitime she will remain the concubine of science.

So, while all modern movements are interesting, whether pathologically or as glimmerings of con-

valescence, one cannot help feeling that they will contribute rather from the negative side to the drama of twenty years hence. As psychology becomes more vital and less mechanical, so will drama be revitalised.

More promising to me seems the community drama (théâtre amateur?) whether here or in America, which starts de novo from actual observation of life, and keeps the science of to-day in the background or out of sight altogether. Already its followers are forming their groups of players, building their theatres and training their producers—the one weak spot is the dearth of the local playwright; every community theatre should have its local, or regional playwright who will interpret the life around him first and foremost in the terms of art. I may be accused of taking "omne ignotum pro magnifico" but for me the more promising phenomenon in England to-day is the movement presided over by the British Drama League, with its 1,500 amateur societies. From them may very possibly develop, in time, municipal theatres and—who knows?—even a national theatre. They may even end by revitalising with a new spirit our present conventional sophisticated commerce-ridden theatre, from whom in turn they can learn a vast amount of the technique of which it is the natural repository, technique which is excellent provided it is looked on as the grammar of the art and not as the art itself. All the official arts, be they painting, sculpture or literature, have to renew themselves in this way if they are not to perish in inanition.

RECENT BOOKS

Reviewed by Norman Marshall

"Scenes and Plays." By Gordon Bottomley. Constable. 6s.

"The Irish Drama, 1896-1928." By Andrew E. Malone. Constable. 15s.

"English Comic Drama, 1700-1750." By F. W. Bateson. Oxford University Press. 7s. 6d.

"Toad of Toad Hall." A play from Kenneth Graham's "Wind in the Willows." By A. A. Milne. Methuen. 5s.

"Stage Craft." By Campbell Fletcher. Daniel. 2s.

"A Myth of Shakespeare." By Charles Williams. Oxford University Press. 5s.

"The Romantic Young Lady." By Martinez Sierra. English Version by Helen and Harley Granville-Barker. Sidgwick and Jackson. 2s. 6d.

"Two Plays." By Lion Feuchtwanger. Secker. 6s.

IN a note at the end of his new book of plays, Mr. Gordon Bottomley describes them as "chamber drama." These plays are neither dramatic or theatrical. They are, I think, definitely unsuited for production in a theatre, nor has the author intended them for the theatre. He argues that in the theatre poetry is "belittled and misused and maimed," and that those who care for the art of verse-speaking have begun to ask for "dramatic poetry that can fulfil itself in the performer, that does not need the mechanism and equipment of the theatre for its unfolding, but that can be produced in any room large enough for a gathering place; and that by such intimacy obtains opportunities for subtle ranges of nuance and effect that can be compared with those of a string quartette." As Mr. Bottomley is the first to admit, the idea is not new. It is the method of the Japanese No drama, and Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. Sturge Moore and Mr. Clifford Bax have all experimented in this direction, but none of these writers has relied so completely as Mr. Bottomley on the spoken word to create its own background and its own atmosphere. In fact, the first performances of several of these pieces took place in a room unsuited to theatre work, on an isolated platform, with no scenic backing, without any help from make-up and only a little from costume, and in broad and uncontrolled daylight. It seems to me that these plays have more claim to be called chamber music than chamber drama. The whole essence of drama is that it appeals to the eye as well as the ear, that it is at its fullest and best only in the theatre, not scorning the mechanism and equipment of the theatre but using it and glorying in it. But whatever label we attach to these writings, the fact remains that in their own way they are effective and beautiful, employing verse which is unfailingly speakable. The most important thing about them is that they can be performed almost anywhere with the minimum of fuss and bother, and perhaps they are the forerunners of a new type of drama which, although definitely untheatrical and possibly undramatic, will make

it possible for little companies of amateur actors to perform at odd half hours (say during the lunch hour in a factory) in almost any kind of room, without the aid of all the elaborate and cumbrous paraphernalia of the ordinary theatrical performance. Possibly they would be more effective broadcast than performed before an audience. It is strange that so few writers have yet realised that the real future of poetic drama is not in the theatre but in the broadcasting studio.

Mr. Malone's book is a very capable and much needed history of the Abbey Theatre and its forerunners. The author is definite and outspoken in his opinions, but he states them quietly and modestly so that his style comes as a relief after the dogmatic brawling which is at the moment the prevailing tone of so much criticism. Another historical study to be unreservedly recommended is Mr. Bateson's book on a period which has hitherto been made to look more arid than it really is by the dry and too scholarly way it has been treated.

The next two books will appeal especially to amateurs. "A Myth of Shakespeare" seeks to provide "a momentarily creditable framework for representative scenes and speeches from the Plays." The method is ingenious and thoroughly practicable and makes a highly successful entertainment. Those who produce plays in schools will find it a godsend. Mr. Campbell Fletcher's has a somewhat misleading title. It is really an elementary handbook to acting, and one of the very few out of many published which I would care to recommend.

Mr. A. A. Milne's adaptation of "The Wind in the Willows" is not only a charming play in itself but a model of how such work should be done. Anybody interested in the technique of play-writing will find it well worth his while to go through the book and the play side by side and note what Mr. Milne has used and what he has rejected, how sometimes he follows his original line by line, and how at another time a mere line or two in the book is developed into a whole scene. The whole play is a brilliant example of Mr. Milne's perfect sense of the theatre, and the preface in his very best manner.

The Feuchtwanger plays are disappointing. "The Oil Islands" is brilliant in conception and has an unusually good theme, but it is clumsily handled and shows little sense of the theatre. Nevertheless, it is an intensely interesting piece of writing. "Warren Hastings" is unexpectedly dull. There is little sense of the dramatic, far too much irrelevant and uninteresting detail, and—most unexpected of all—little really successful characterisation. The English versions are by the same translators who dealt so brilliantly with "Jew Suss," but this time the result proves once again that play translation requires an unerring sense of the stage. For those who wish to study play translation at its most perfect, I recommend Mr. Granville-Barker's version of "The Romantic Young Lady" which has now been published separately from the rest of the Sierra translations.

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE NOTES



THE JOURNAL OF

THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

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Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal.

BY the time this number of the DRAMA is in the hands of its readers the Annual Meeting of the League will have been held. The minutes of the meeting will be printed in the October number of the magazine, as usual, DRAMA not being published either in August or September. The general office of the League will remain open throughout the holiday season, but the Library will be closed from August 1 to 15, and no books will be sent out during that period though any volumes which are due from borrowers will be taken in. The Library will also be closed at 2 o'clock on the afternoon of Monday, July 15, when we are expecting a visit from members of the Drama League of America who are making a theatre tour of

Europe. We are glad that last year's tour proved so successful that it is to be repeated.

Early in September members will receive the programme of the Autumn Conference of the League which, this year, will be held at Northampton by kind invitation of the Northampton Repertory Players, during the week-end of Friday and Saturday, October 25 and 26. It is requested that any member or affiliated society desiring to place items on the agenda for the Business Meeting on Saturday, October 26, will forward the same to the Secretary of the League not later than September 1. A very interesting programme is being arranged for the Conference. This will include some performances kindly offered by the Northamptonshire Federation of Women's Institutes. It is therefore believed that this year the Conference will have a special attraction for all those concerned with the development of village drama. A gala performance will also be given by the Northampton Repertory Theatre whose producer is Mr. Herbert Prentice.

An advertisement of the three Drama League Summer Schools will be found elsewhere in this issue. Amateurs who intend to enrol as students at one or other of these Schools are warned that by the end of July there may be difficulty in finding accommodation. Especially is this the case at Fairlight; but, at the time of going to press, several students who have taken bungalows there have vacancies which are available for other students attending the School. Application for these should be made without delay to 8 Adelphi Terrace, W.C.2. Those interested in radio drama should note that a lecture on this subject has recently been added to the Fairlight programme. On the evening of Tuesday, August 6, Mr. Val Gielgud the Productions Director at Savoy Hill, will give a lecture on "Some Practical Hints on Radio Drama." This lecture will not only be of great practical value, but it will disclose the remarkable evolution which is taking place in the technique of Broadcast Drama.

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF THEATRICAL TERMS

Compiled by W. G. Fay

IN June, 1928, while producing at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre, I was asked by Mr. Chatwin if I could undertake an intensive school for amateur producers affiliated to the British Drama League. In drafting a programme for it, I found that many of the students were anxious to know the technical terms used in the Theatre for various operations; those used on the stage itself, and in the different departments—and by the actors. It seemed to me that there might be many people who would find interest in a glossary of theatre technical terms, and that also it might be useful to young actors and actresses who, under modern conditions, have slight opportunity of learning the meaning of these terms unless they work as assistant stage managers. I do not think I have, here, a complete list, but those friends of mine who were kind enough to look it over could not suggest additions. I should be very grateful if any reader will send me others, so that at some future time I may find an opportunity to make a complete dictionary of theatrical terms.

Act-drop.—The painted scene lowered to indicate the end of an act, or the termination of the play. This scene has been replaced by tableaux curtains in most theatres. (See Tabs.)

Acting Manager.—The business manager of the theatre. He controls the entire front of the house, pays salaries to staff and artists, and in a touring company arranges the transport of his company from town to town.

Advance Booking.—Seats bought at the Box Office, previous to the opening of the theatre for the performance.

Arcs.—Electric Arc Lamps used behind the proscenium to flood the front of the stage, or standards for flooding entrances. They have been replaced in modern theatres by high power gas-filled lamps.

A.S.M.—Assistant stage manager. He is generally the person who prompts the play. He helps the stage manager in directing the setting of the stage, lighting, etc., and sends the call-boy to call the acts, and the artists.

Baby Spot.—A small metal box containing a lens, groove for coloured mediums, and a small power lamp. Used for lighting portions of the stage needing special direct light, and for lighting the

faces of the actors from short distances. Its portable form makes it a very useful electric unit.

Backings.—Exterior, or interior scenes placed behind doors, windows, or any openings to prevent the audience from seeing the unused portion of the stage.

Bails.—Small brass balls working in a brass socket and let into the front of stage doors to prevent them from swinging open; they act in place of the latch of an ordinary house door.

Ballet.—The ladies or gentlemen engaged in an opera, musical play, or pantomime, to dance the ballets.

Band Room.—The room under the stage where the members of the orchestra wait during the acts of a play without music.

Battens.—Long strips of wood attached to the tops and bottoms of cloths. To the top batten the working lines are attached by means of grommets.

Batten Lights.—A long metal hood with a row of low power lamps attached to a pipe within it. They are suspended from the "grid" in parallel rows. In most theatres there are four from the proscenium to the back of the stage. They should be wired in at least three sections to allow of colour changes.

Batten Out.—The battens on a cloth are sometimes hinged in the middle to render them more portable. Before use on the stage a hinged batten must be stiffened by fixing an additional piece of timber to the hinged part to prevent it bending when the cloth is raised or lowered. This stiffening is known as "Battening Out."

Bar Bells.—The stage manager rings from the bell board in the prompt corner the bar bells three minutes before the curtain rises to warn members of the audience using the bars to return to their seats.

Bays.—Packs of flats in store are placed upright between pairs of scaffolding poles, the space between each set of poles is a "bay."

Black Out.—To cut out at once all the light on the stage by using the main switch on the stage switchboard.

Black Out Switch.—The master switch on the stage switchboard which controls every light on the stage.

Blinders.—A strip of low power lamps placed in front of the footlights in the auditorium to prevent the audience seeing the stage during a black out.

Booking.—Buying seats at the box office. Contracts between a resident manager and a touring manager to play at his theatre are called "bookings."

Borders.—Lengths of painted canvas six feet wide hung across the stage to mask the border lights, the top of the scenes, and those not in use.

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF THEATRICAL TERMS

- Box Office Clerk.**—The theatre official who sells and books seats at the box office.
- Box Office Cards.**—Particulars of a play printed on stiff cardboard for display at the theatre Box Office, or any other place where theatre seats are on sale.
- Brail.**—To fasten up a scene to a batten with short ropes instead of a set of lines.
- Braces.**—Adjustable wooden or iron rods for holding flats upright. They are fastened to the stage with a stage screw or iron screweye and hooked on to the toggle rail of the flat. (See Toggle rail, flat.)
- Bridges.**—Sections of the stage that can be raised or lowered when a scene necessitates the alteration of the level of part of the stage. The bridges work in a sliding frame and are counter-weighted. When not in use they are lowered below the stage level and covered by the "Sliders." (See Sliders.)
- Bol.**—Armenian bole is a fine red powder used on the stage to give the effect of sun burn to the skin.
- Box Scene.**—A scene built up of flats, forming the back and two sides, so called to distinguish it from a scene made up of a backcloth and side wings.
- Bunch Lights.**—A number of low-power lamps backed by a large concave reflector and mounted on a gun barrel standard. Used to flood backings and entrances.
- Business.**—All movements and actions used by actors in playing a scene; such as opening and reading letters, eating or preparing meals, fights, smoking, etc.
- Calls.**—All notices placed on the call board giving directions to the artists or staff. To come before the curtain in response to applause from the audience. (See Take Call.)
- Call Beginners.**—Direction to the call-boy when the orchestra starts to play the overture, to call on to the stage the actors who open the play. He calls, "Overture and Beginners."
- Call Board.**—The notice board placed near the stage door. All notices affecting staff or artists are displayed on it.
- Call-Boy.**—One of the stage managers' assistants whose duty is to call the artists from their dressing rooms when they are required on the stage.
- Call the Act.**—A direction to the call-boy to bring the actors on the stage required for the opening scene of a play.
- Call Over.**—Every afternoon the box office keeper at a London theatre telephones the outside booking agencies for the number of seats they have sold. He marks these off on his seat plan, those unsold being available for sale at the theatre in the evening. This is a "Call Over."
- Carpet Cut.**—A slot cut across the stage just behind the footlights closed with a hinged lid. The edge of a carpet or stage cloth is dropped into the slot and the lid shut on it to hold them in position.
- Castors.**—Metal fittings containing a wheel inserted in the bottom of heavy flats to give ease of movement.
- Centage.**—A telegraphic word for Per Cent. referring to the division of the gross receipts between the lessee of the theatre and the manager of a touring company.
- Ceiling.**—A framed canvas painted to represent a ceiling and hung on the top of the flats in an interior scene.
- Cellars.**—The room directly under the stage from which the traps, sliders, and bridges are worked.
- Centre Line.**—A line struck from the middle of the footlights to the middle of the back wall of the stage. All positions on the stage are calculated from this line.
- Centre Lines.**—(See Lines.)
- Centre Opening.**—The centre door or opening in a scene.
- Chamber Scenes.**—An old term for all "room" scenes.
- Character Man.**—The actor who plays lawyers, doctors, military officers, etc.—Part dealing with character as distinct from leads. (See Leads.)
- Checkers.**—The ticket-takers at the various entrances to a theatre.
- Chorus.**—The ladies or gentlemen who sing or dance in the chorus of an opera, musical play, or pantomime.
- Cleats.**—Metal or wooden horn-shaped brackets fixed to the fly-rail or to the top of flats to make lines fast by twisting them round the horns.
- Cleat Lines.**—A length of sash-cord fastened to the top of a flat; it is thrown over a cleat on the adjoining flat and made fast at the bottom, thus binding the two flats together.
- Cloth.**—Any scene painted on canvas or net, fitted with battens top and bottom to be hung or rolled up. Not framed scenery.
- Costume Plot.**—A list of the various characters in a play with their changes of costume detailed for each act, and if necessary for each scene.
- Counterweights.**—A circular slotted iron weight, used to anchor the braces instead of stage screws. In modern theatres the cloths when hung are attached to counterweights on the side wall of the stage to reduce the power needed for raising and lowering them. (See Cloths.)
- Cue.**—The words typed in an actor's script, giving him the last few words of the previous speech to which he must reply. A note in the prompt copy of the play indicating working of effects, change of scene, lowering the curtain, music, etc.
- Cut.**—Any opening in the stage, such as traps, etc. To delete lines or business from an actor's part, or the prompt copy of a play.
- Cut Cloth.**—Any cloth that has cut-out pillars, arches, foliage, tree trunks, etc.
- Cut Script.**—To delete unnecessary words or business from the manuscript of a play.
- Crepe Hair.**—Hair plaited and baked used by actors for making beards, moustaches, whiskers, etc.
- Cyclorama.**—Sometimes called a "Horizon Cloth." A semi-circular canvas backing to the stage from the grid to the floor. Used in exterior scenes where there is no plaster dome in the theatre. It is a better medium for lighting than a back cloth and wings, and besides admits the use of the full height of the stage, no borders being necessary. (See Heaven.)

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF THEATRICAL TERMS

- Day Bill.**—A small poster designed for use in shop windows. It is generally 30 inches by 10. It contains the name of the play, author, cast, time of performance and prices of the seats.
- Dead.**—When a cloth is newly hung it is lowered until it hangs level, the bottom batten just touching the stage floor. It is then said to be "on its dead." It is also used to denote that any hanging scene or border is suspended level in its place.
- Dates.**—The successive Mondays on which a Touring Company is due to perform at the various towns on their tour list are their "Dates."
- Day Men.**—The members of the stage staff employed in the theatre in the day as distinct from those employed at night, "night men." The stage carpenter, property man and electrician, have a day man each to assist them.
- Digs.** A theatrical term for an actor's lodgings when on tour.
- Dimmers.**—Electric resistances for checking the stage lighting. They are made of iron wire cased in metal frames or of lead terminals immersed in weak acid contained in large earthenware pots.
- Dip.**—A pocket cut in the stage with a hinged metal lid where current for temporary lights can be got from plugs placed in the pocket.
- Dock Doors.**—The doors leading into the scene, store, or dock.
- Door Furniture.**—The finger plates, escutcheons, handles, locks, latches, bolts of stage doors.
- Double Crown.**—A poster 30 inches by 20 inches. The most frequently used form of theatrical printing.
- Down Stage.**—Any place on the stage within six feet of the footlights. All movements from the back of the stage towards the footlights.
- Dress Parade.**—An inspection by the producer of a play of the actors in the costumes they will wear before the Dress Rehearsal.
- Effects.**—All light changes such as sun setting, moon rising, dawn, etc. Mechanical devices on or off the stage to suggest trains, thunder, lightning, church bells, etc.
- Extras.**—Ladies or gentlemen engaged in a play to sing or dance as chorus or to walk on. (See Walk on.)
- Fade Out.**—To reduce gradually the lighting of the stage by passing the current through dimmers or electric resistance. (See Dimmers.)
- False Pros.**—A temporary proscenium erected inside the real one, used in plays with a number of short scenes to reduce the time and labour of setting by having a permanent scene covering most of the stage.
- Fireproof.**—The fire-resisting curtain closing the proscenium opening. It hangs in front of the "Tabs" or Actdrop and it is balanced so that a slight pull of a lever will set it in motion.
- First Day Man.**—The stage-hand who assists the head of a stage department during the day. The stage carpenter, property man, and electrician have each a first day man.
- Fit-up.**—A portable frame to hang borders and cloths on for erection in buildings without a proper proscenium, flies or grid. It also is used to denote a touring company visiting small towns and playing in Town Hall or like buildings, and carrying their own fit-up stage and scenery.
- Flippers.**—Any piece of painted profile board hinged to a flat to allow of it being folded when not in use.
- Flog.**—To beat the dust off canvas with a whip made of canvas strips fastened to a wooden handle.
- Flies.**—The galleries that run from the proscenium wall to the back of the stage. They have a thick protecting rail in front to which the ropes used to raise and lower the scenes are made fast.
- Fittings.**—All electric light or gas fittings used in a scene.
- Flapper.**—The young girls' parts in a play are called "Flapper Parts."
- Flickers.**—A circular metal disc slotted with different coloured mediums, and revolved by hand in front of an arc or high-powered lamp to flood the stage with a flickering light of various colours for dances.
- Floats.**—Footlights. When gas was used to light the stage, changes of colour in the lighting were obtained by floating, or pulling up, in front of the gas footlights a frame filled with glass of different colours.
- Fly.**—To "Fly" is to pull up a hanging cloth or border into its place.
- Fly Ladders.**—The ladders on either side of the stage by which the fly-men reach the fly floor or gallery.
- Fly Posting.**—Play bills posted on any place that is not a regular station for bills. It is mostly used by travelling circuses in the country where there are no proper bill posting stations.
- Fly Rail.**—The heavy timber rail along the front of the flies to which the ropes supporting the scenery are fastened round their cleats.
- Footlights, or Foots.**—The electric or other lights in front of the stage. They should be divided into at least three sections and three different colours if electric light is used.
- French Windows.**—Windows (without sashes) reaching to the ground, glazed and made to open in the middle.
- Front of the House.**—The auditorium and box office, bars, exits, etc. The part of the theatre in front of the stage.
- Frost.**—A piece of ground glass for placing in front of an electric lamp to reduce the strength of the light.
- Fox Wedges.**—Long thin wooden wedges. Most flats are made with right-angle corners, if these are used on a stage with a rake or rise on it from back to front, fox wedges are placed under them to keep them perpendicular.
- Full Bottom Wigs.**—Long wigs of the Charles II period.
- Gag.**—To introduce extempore words or lines into a play that are not in the official prompt copy.
- Gauges.**—Cloths made of thin net batted top and bottom, used to get effects of fog or dimness. All lighting must be done from behind them.
- Get Over.**—To make a part or a play successful with the audience.
- Glass Crash.**—A quantity of broken glass emptied from a bucket on to a piece of sheet iron used to give the illusion of breaking glass.
- Grande Dame.**—The actress who plays queens and aristocratic old ladies, etc.

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF THEATRICAL TERMS

- Grave Trap.**—A rectangular opening or trap, near the front of the stage, used for grave scenes in Hamlet, etc. Hence its name.
- Grease Paints.**—Paints manufactured with lard as a basis, used by actors because of the ease by which they can be removed.
- Green Room.**—All theatres had at one time a waiting room for the actors near the stage called the Green Room. In modern theatres the actors wait in their dressing rooms until the call boy warns them they are wanted on the stage.
- Grommet.**—A short piece of sash-cord fastened to the top of a cloth or ceiling to fasten the working lines to.
- Grooves.**—Wooden grooves on the stage, and suspended above it used in the theatre in the past to slide the flats across the stage. The side wings also had grooves in which they could slide on or off the stage. The flats were held rigid by the grooves and braces when not in use. They were numbered in rotation up the stage about six feet apart, as first groove, second groove, etc.
- Ground Row.**—A painted flat of which the length is greater than the height placed in front of a backcloth to represent a wall, a bank, distant hills, etc. When it is necessary to use a rostrum to get elevation on the stage it is usually concealed behind a ground row.
- Gross.**—The gross receipts for a performance includes advance booking and money taken at the theatre doors.
- Hall-keeper.**—The member of the theatre staff who is in charge of the stage door, answers enquiries and is responsible for the letters and parcels directed to the artists. Sometimes called "The Stage Door Keeper."
- Hand Props.**—The small articles used by actors on the stage such as keys, pipes, cigars, books, letters, whips, sticks, etc.
- Heaven.**—A built plaster alcove placed at the back of most modern stages to be used in place of backcloths, and to do away with the necessity of using borders. It should be built right up to the grid.
- Heavy Man.**—The actor who plays villains, the bad characters in a play.
- House.**—The auditorium of a theatre.
- House Lights.**—The electric lights or gas illuminating the auditorium, passages, and front of the theatre. All lighting except that on or behind the stage.
- Ingénues.**—The young girl's parts in a play now often called "flappers' parts."
- Juveniles.**—The young men characters in a play.
- L.1.**—Left-hand first entrance on to the stage.
- L.2.**—Left-hand second entrance on to the stage.
- Leads.**—The actor and actress who play the two principal parts in a play.
- Leading Lady.**—The actress who plays the principal part in a play.
- Leaking Light.**—When the flats in a scene are not properly braced together, the audience can see the lights used behind them, and they are said to "Leak Light."
- Left.**—The left-hand side of the stage facing the audience.
- Left of Stage.**—Left of the centre line of the stage facing the audience. (See Centre Line.)
- Length.**—A portable grooved wood casing to which small power lamps are fixed used to illuminate outside doors, and windows on the stage.
- Light Plot.**—A list of the various changes of lighting used in a play. It should note every light unit and every change made to it during a performance.
- Limes.**—An oxy-hydrogen flame played on a lime cylinder and projected through a lens to get a flood light on the stage. They were fixed on perches at the back of the proscenium to flood the front of the stage, and also used in place of the present standards. The name is now applied to the arc lamps on the pros. perches that have replaced the real lime lights.
- Lines.**—The ropes used for raising and lowering the scenery are called lines. There are three attached to each scene—one at each end and one in the centre. The one most distant from the fly rail from which it is worked is the "Long Line," and that nearest the "Short Line." The centre one is, of course, "The Centre Line." The word is also used to describe the type-written lines in an actor's part, or script.
- Linkman.**—The attendant in front of the theatre to open carriage doors for visitors or call their conveyances after the performance. In the past he held a lighted torch or link.
- Lithos.**—Any lithographed picture or design on a poster used to advertise a play. The stock size is double crown, 30 inches, by 20.
- Long Line.**—(See Lines.)
- L.U.E.**—Left upper entrance. The last entrance on the left-hand side of the stage facing the audience.
- Lyrics.**—The songs in a musical play.
- Make-Up.**—The materials, paints, etc., used by actors to alter their appearance and to allow for the difference produced by the artificial lighting of the stage.
- Mask In.**—To cover any opening in a scene with curtains or flats to prevent the audience from seeing the parts of the stage not in use. (See Backings.)
- Matinée Call.**—The announcement on the call-board that there will be an afternoon performance.
- Mediums.**—Square pieces of coloured gelatine placed in front of white electric lamps to get colour effects.
- Money-Takers.**—The men who sell tickets at the various entrances to the theatre, except the box office.
- Music Cue.**—A note on the prompt copy of a play to indicate where music is to be used either on the stage or in the orchestra.
- Newel.**—The end post of the hand-railing of a staircase.
- Noises Off.**—Any sounds made behind the scenes to give the illusion of horses, motors, thunder, etc. They are marked in the prompt book with an indication of what part of the stage they take place, and at what particular word in the dialogue they begin, and also when they stop.
- Numbers.**—The songs and dances in the score of a musical play are numbered in rotation for convenience and are referred to as "numbers."



MASKS FOR THE COMMEDIA DELL'ARTE
 BY L. O. BURNACINI. REPRODUCED IN
 MONUMENTA SCENICA FROM THE ORIGINAL
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Photo: Ernest Salomon

SCENE FROM THE CRADLE SONG
AS PRODUCED AT THE DALLAS
LITTLE THEATRE, U.S.A. BY
COURTESY OF THE DIRECTOR,
MR. OLIVER HINSDALL.

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF THEATRICAL TERMS

- Oblique.**—Any scenery set at more or less than a right-angle to the centre-line of the stage is said to be set oblique.
- Old Men.**—The actor who plays fathers or the oldest characters in a play.
- Off Set.**—Any portion of a scene set at right-angles to the centre-line, except the backings.
- O.P.**—Opposite the prompt side. (See Prompt.)
- Pace.**—The rapidity which a company of actors perform their parts, or the time the acts of play take in performance.
- Packs.**—A quantity of flats placed one in front of the other against the side wall of the stage or in store, are referred to as a pack.
- Pageant.**—Plays, tableaux or processions in costume when performed in the open air.
- Paint Frame.**—The large wooden frame raised and lowered by a winch and counterbalanced on which the canvas is stretched by the artist who paints the scenes. In most theatres it is at the back of the stage on a level with the fly floor and lit from a sky-light above the grid.
- Part.**—The type-script of a character in a play giving cues, words, and business for the actor to memorise, as distinct from a complete copy of the play.
- Patches.**—Small pieces of black court plaster cut in patterns and used in plays of the eighteenth century.
- Pelmet.**—The valance or border in front of the act drop or tabs. A valance on the top of a window to mask the curtain pole.
- Perches.**—The wooden or iron stages placed on either side of the stage at the back of the proscenium about twelve feet from the stage level. They are used to house the limes, arcs, or other flood lights used to light the stage area just behind the footlights.
- Permanent Setting.**—A scene so designed that the principal parts of it remain fixed throughout the play, changes being made by altering the backings. A play in which the whole action takes place in one scene is not referred to as a "permanent setting," but is said to have "one set" only.
- Pilot Light.**—A small power electric light placed in circuit on the stage switchboard, with battens, footlights or signal lights so that the electrician can tell if they are in working order. In gas lighting they are small burners placed at the ends of the battens and footlights and kept always lit so that they could be made to light from a distance.
- Plug Box.**—A box containing a set of plug holders to which the plugs feeding portable lights or fittings are attached. (See Dips.)
- Plugs.**—Electrical connectors for portable lights or fittings. They are fastened to the end of cables and inserted in a plug box set in or on the stage.
- Positions.**—The places where the actors sit or stand on the stage during performance. They are fixed during rehearsal by the producer of the play.
- Proscenium Ladders.**—A strip of small power lamps suspended vertically on the stage at the back of the proscenium.
- Profile.**—Thin planks of wood with scrim canvas glued to both sides used on the edges of flats requiring an irregular outline such as foliage, stones, masonry, etc.
- Prompt Corner.**—The side of the stage just behind the proscenium, from which the stage manager controls the performance. In most theatres it is the left-hand side facing the audience.
- Prompt Copy.**—The official typescript or printed copy of a play which the stage manager uses.
- Prompt Side.**—The side of the stage from which the stage manager prompts and controls the play. In most theatres it is the left side facing the audience.
- Properties.**—All furniture, curtains, firegrates, pictures, china, etc., used for dressing the stage, whether in an exterior or interior scene. Also all letters, swords, purses or personal articles used by the actors. (See Hand Props.)
- Property Plot.**—A typewritten list of all the furniture, curtains, pictures, carpets, lamps, etc., used in each scene of a play. It should also contain a ground plan of the setting of the furniture. Letters, pipes, books, etc., required by the actors should be included. (See Hand Props.)
- Prop Table.**—Tables are placed near the principal entrances on either side of the stage to hold the various small articles used by the actors during a play. (See Hand Props.)
- Proscenium.**—The masonry or woodwork surrounding the stage opening in the auditorium. It also applies to the wall separating the stage from the auditorium.
- Pros. Wings.**—Proscenium wings. The wings immediately behind the proscenium. (See Wings.)
- Pros.**—The Proscenium.
- Quick Change.**—To change rapidly from one scene to another. When an actor is compelled to change costume rapidly.
- Quick Change Room.**—A room made of flats on the side of the stage to accommodate an actor who has to change costume so rapidly that he would not have time to reach his dressing room and return to the stage. It is fitted with a chair and table, mirror and portable light.
- R.1.**—The right-hand side first entrance on to the stage.
- R.2.**—The right-hand side second entrance on to the stage.
- Ramp.**—A slope made of planks from a rostrum to the stage when steps are not used.
- Rain Box.**—A metal or wooden box about 4 feet by 6 inches by 6 inches containing a number of dried peas. By tilting it up and down slowly it gives the sound of rain falling.
- Rake.**—The rise on a stage from the footlights to the back wall. Modern stages are built with a flat stage, and the auditorium is raked instead.
- Rehearsal Call.**—The notice placed on the call board at the stage door informing the actors of the time, place, and acts of the play to be rehearsed at the next rehearsal.
- Responsible Man.**—The actor who plays small parts.
- Return Date.**—To make a return visit with a play to the same theatre.
- Reveals.**—Thin boards placed behind doors and windows on the stage to give depth and an illusion of solidity to the scene.

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF THEATRICAL TERMS

- Revolve.**—A scene of flats with castors let into bottom sills, so that it can be turned rapidly to show another scene painted on the back.
- Returns.**—The official list of all seats sold at a performance. Flats used next the proscenium to make up the off-stage side of a scene.
- Right.**—The right-hand side of the stage facing the audience.
- Right of Stage.**—Right of the centre-line facing the audience.
- Ring Down.**—To signal to the flies by light or bell for the fly-men to lower the front curtain at the end of an act or the end of the play.
- Ring in the Band.**—The stage manager signals to the band room for the orchestra to start the overture or music between the acts.
- Roll Out.**—A hinged horizontal flap let into the bottom of a flat so that an actor can roll through it on to the stage. Used in pantomime.
- Rounds.**—The applause given by the audience.
- Rostrums.**—Portable platforms used for various purposes, consisting of a top made of tongued and grooved flooring boards an inch in thickness, this stands on a hinged framing capable of being closed up when not in use.
- R.U.E.**—Right upper entrance on to the stage. That is the last entrance on the right-hand side facing the audience.
- Runway.**—A platform projecting from the stage into the auditorium. Used in Revues for parading the artists through the audience.
- Sand Bags.**—The ropes for raising the scenes when not in use have small canvas bags filled with sand attached to them to act as ballast to bring them on to the stage when lowered.
- Scenario.**—A short written description of the story of a play giving details of scenes and the characters without any dialogue.
- Scene Dock.**—The space at either side of the stage where the scenery is stored.
- Scratch Wigs.**—Rough, untidy, short-haired wigs used for comedy parts.
- Scrim.**—Thin open-weave canvas used for transparencies or for making profile board. (See Profile.)
- Script.**—The official working copy of a play, whether typed, printed, or written.
- Set Piece.**—A small piece of scenery representing a rock, the side of a building, or other object that has to be set within the scene. It is placed there to heighten the perspective of a scene or for practical use as in the case of a garden gate, or a grass bank.
- Sheet.**—The plan of the theatre seats used in the box office to mark off the booked seats for a performance.
- Sheets.**—All large posters used for theatre advertisement are reckoned in double-crown, that is, 30 inches by 20 inches. Each double-crown is a "sheet."
- 6-Sheet.**—Any theatrical poster six double-crown sheets in size.
- 12-Sheet.**—Any theatrical poster twelve double-crown sheets in size.
- 24-Sheet.**—Any theatrical poster twenty-four double-crown sheets in size.
- Sliders.**—Sections of the stage that are movable so that scenes can be lowered into the cellars or the bridges brought up through them if needed. They are fitted with a locking device to prevent them opening when not in use.
- Short Line.**—(See Lines.)
- Sides.**—An actor's typewritten part from which he has to learn is typed on half-sheets of ordinary typewriting paper. Each page is called a "side."
- Sight Lines.**—The limits of visibility of the stage from various parts of the auditorium. The gallery, circles, and stalls.
- Sills.**—Wrought iron strips fixed to the bottom of door or window frames to make them rigid.
- Snow.**—Fine salt is used on the stage or the actor's clothes to represent snow.
- Snow Box.**—A framed canvas bag with holes pierced in it and filled with paper cut very fine. When swayed gently the paper sifts through the holes and gives the effect of falling snow. The snow box is suspended from a set of lines and taken up behind the borders.
- Soap Over.**—All light reflecting surfaces used at back of a scene facing the audience must be soaped or covered with thin gauze to prevent the audience seeing the foot or batten lights reflected in them.
- Spill.**—The area of effective lighting of a lamp. (See Throw.)
- Spirit Gum.**—White hard varnish used by actors to fasten the fronts of wigs to the forehead, or beards or moustaches to the face.
- Spot Light.**—A blackened metal box containing a high power lamp, lens, and a groove for placing coloured mediums in front of the lens. Used to give extra illumination to a particular section of the stage.
- Square Cuts.**—The skirted coats used by men in plays of the eighteenth century.
- Stage Cloth.**—A painted canvas to cover the floor of the stage, representing flooring, pavement or tiles, etc. It is sometimes used as the surround to a carpet in a room scene.
- Stage Hands.**—The men employed at the theatre and controlled by the stage manager to assist the stage carpenter, property man, or electrician.
- Stage Manager.**—The controller of everything behind the curtain, both artists and staff. He is responsible for the performance of the play, setting the scenes, lights, dressing, etc. It is his business to see that the actors keep the play on the lines it was handed over to him by the producer.
- Stage Screw.**—A metal screw of wide thread and flat handle for fastening braces to the flats or floor of the stage.
- Standards.**—High power lamps in a cup-shaped metal shield fixed to gun-barrel mountings to allow alteration of height. Used to flood large areas behind the scenes.
- Stand By.**—Direction by the stage manager to the stage staff to be ready to change scenery, or work effects. It also means for the actors to remain in their places for calls at the end of an act or the end of the play. (See Calls.)

A SHORT GLOSSARY OF THEATRICAL TERMS

Star Trap.—Traps in the stage on the right and left side near the footlights. Originally the lids were made in sections to open in the shape of a star. Used in pantomimes.

Stiles.—The wooden strips forming the framework of a flat. The size of timber in use generally is 3 inches by $\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Stop Block.—A small block of wood fastened to the back doors and windows to prevent them being opened in the wrong direction. Also fixed to the top and bottom of flats to insure a good joint when they are cleated together.

Study.—Learning a part in a play.

Strips.—Short lengths of wooden grooved casing with small power electric lamps screwed to them for lighting outside doors, windows, stairs, etc. (See Lengths.)

Supers.—Workmen engaged to walk on the stage in crowd scenes.

Swab.—To wipe over with thin glue and hot water a patch of canvas covering a hole in a cloth or a flat.

Tabs.—Tableaux curtains. The front curtains of the stage lowered to indicate the end of an act and the end of a play.

Take Call.—"Taking a call" means that the actors at the end of an act, or the end of the play, remain on the stage while the curtain is raised or parted in response to applause from the audience.

Take the Corner.—To move either to the right- or left-hand corner of the stage.

Toggle Rails.—The stretcher battens inserted in the middle of framed scenery to take the strain of the canvas, and to which the braces are made fast.

Tails.—Short pieces of painted canvas hung from the fly rail to prevent the audience in the front seats seeing over the tops of the scenes the working part of the stage.

Tempo.—The rhythm an actor uses in playing, varying one scene with another for the sake of contrast.

Throwaway.—A small hand-bill or card giving particulars of a play printed in large quantities for distribution in shops, hotels, etc.

Throw.—The distance the rays of a lamp can be used effectively in any particular direction.

Throw Away.—To deliver a part of a speech or dialogue with rapidity, bordering on indistinctness because it is not good acting material.

Truck.—A low platform on castors used for moving very heavy portions of a scene or large staircases.

Thunder Sheet.—A long strip of sheet iron hung from the flies and when shaken gives the effect of thunder.

Tie Wags.—Wigs used in the Sheridan period, tied at the back with bows of silk ribbon.

Time Sheet.—The stage manager's list of the playing time of each act, the intervals, and the total time taken in performance. This is necessary in order to check any alteration in speed of the acting.

Tormentors.—Painted flats or curtains placed right behind the proscenium to mask from the audience the prompter, and lighting effects down stage.

Transparency.—A cloth painted on linen or scrim so that the whole or part of it becomes trans-

parent when illuminated from behind. To give the effect of illuminated buildings, visions, moonlight, etc.

Trick Line.—Strong black string. It is used to pull things off the stage in sight of the audience or to pull down hinged portions of flats in a quick-change of scene.

Tumble.—When the stage of a theatre is not high enough to take a cloth right out of sight of the audience it can be taken up on two sets of lines, one on the bottom and another on the top, a tumbler batten being placed in the fold to prevent creasing. A scene is said to be "tumbled" when taken up in this way.

Tumbler.—A thin round batten to roll cloths round when they are stored. It is also used to ballast empty lines in place of sand bags. (See Sand Bags.)

Turn Over.—Means to go through a pack of flats, turning each one round to examine their condition, or the design painted on them.

Train Call.—The notice placed on the Call Board giving the time of departure and arrival of the train conveying the company to the next town. Used by touring companies.

Try Back.—A direction given at rehearsal for the repetition of a scene, or part to a scene, to make certain that the actors understand correctly alterations made in the acting or words of the play.

Up Stage.—Any position on the stage beyond six feet from the footlights. All movements from the footlights towards the back of the stage.

Ushers.—The men or women in the front of the theatre who show the audience to their seats.

Vamps.—Doors cut in a flat and fitted with rubber springs for an actor to jump through. Used in pantomime.

Vision.—To cut out a portion of a cloth and cover it with gauze, and to make a character visible to the audience through it by illuminating the back of it, giving the effect of a vision.

Vision Cloth.—A cloth with a portion cut out and covered with gauze used for vision effects.

Walk On.—A part in a play where the actor does not speak but has business to do.

Warning.—A signal light, or bell, used by the stage manager to warn his staff of a change of scene, or to lower the curtain at the end of an act, or the end of the play.

Wings.—Painted flats set at the sides of the stage parallel to the footlights. They were used in all theatres until the box, or enclosed scene, came into use.

Wind Machine.—A ribbed wooden drum mounted on a metal spindle with a handle attached, and supported on a wooden stand. It is rotated against a piece of stretched canvas to give the sound of wind.

"The Tower," a new drama by Mary Pakington, will be given at the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead, for one week beginning on Monday, July 15, at 8.15 p.m. The play is being produced by Mr. John Fernald.

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

WELWYN GARDEN CITY

A Dramatic Festival will take place here from July 8-11, when performances will be given by sixteen of the leading Amateur Dramatic Societies in the South of England. Mr. Miles Malleson will be the judge. Full particulars may be obtained from the Box Office, Welwyn Theatre. 'Phone: Welwyn Garden, 456.

THE PLINIUS PLAYERS IN "IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE"

This bright farce was most certainly a very happy choice on the part of the Plinius Players, because it was admirably suited to their company, which is, incidentally, a very talented one.

The one important thing about the playing of farce is pace. If the play does not go "bang" from the beginning, the effect is probably lost. Now the pace and slickness with which the Plinius Players took things was admirable; in fact, I do not know that I have ever seen better in any amateur company. There was a sureness of touch from the moment the curtain went up. I have only one serious criticism, namely that the Plinius Players should begin their performance as near as possible to the time announced.

ROBERT NEWTON

THE HYPOCRITES A.D.S.

One of the outstanding events of the London amateur world this spring has been the production of "Jack Sheppard" by the Hypocrites A.D.S. at the Rudolf Steiner Hall. This melodrama was played in the true blood and thunder spirit which was enhanced by groans, boos and cheers from the audience. Although the producer, Mr. Robert Newton, in the programme notes, stated that the play would not be unduly burlesqued, we felt that a slightly less burlesqued presentation would have been an improvement. The play was, however, produced with care and originality, and the players acted with a zest and spirit which were wholly admirable.

THE DOUGLASS PLAYERS

The Douglass Players have lately forsaken the classics and performed Bernard Shaw's "You Never Can Tell." The producer was much handicapped in this production by the smallness of the stage, but the company rose nobly to the occasion and gave a most interesting performance. Players taking parts of middle-aged or elderly people should take more care with their make-up and actions. In two cases little had been done to hide the obvious youth of the performers. Undoubtedly the training in the old comedies has done the company good service as they have much improved in assurance and technique since the last performance I saw them give of a modern play, which was, I think, "The Cheerful Knave." They should be encouraged to try their hand at another modern play.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

DEAR SIR,—With so many people devoted to the work of the theatre, it seems strange that it should be so difficult to satisfy some of the needs of a theatre like ours. Our greatest difficulty is to find a stage manager. Most people seem to think that to be good on "props" and "noises off" is all that is required of a stage manager.

Now, as what applies to the St. Pancras People's Theatre applies to almost all community theatres, may I point out what are essential qualities and qualifications of a successful stage manager in such a theatre? He (or) she wants (1) a certain amount of executive ability, and a quick and active brain, to "run" the stage and arrange all the preparatory work incumbent on a successful weekly production; (2) a pair of very good hands and strong arms, and not to be afraid of using them; (3) some elementary knowledge of electricity, and an interest in and appreciation of the value of stage lighting; (4) he needs to be devoted to the theatre, to like hard work and to possess a certain amount of patience and tact, and above all, to be methodical and tidy. If the attention of some such person is drawn by this letter to the opportunities that the St. Pancras People's Theatre offers in this direction, I should be very glad to hear from him (or her).

Perhaps it is as well to say that the theatre is run for social service, and has a large regular audience appreciating its weekly productions. It has a certain stage with an exceptionally good lighting plant. It is under professional direction, but the producer is nearly worked to death for lack of a good second possessing the above qualifications. The job would be a full-time one, mainly concerned with stage management and the thousand and one details such a position entails, but it needs someone who would be able to carry on the work of the theatre in an emergency. We cannot offer a large enough salary to get a good professional for this work, but I feel sure that among your many members there must be some who would find such a job most interesting and at the same time be glad of the £150 a year we are able to give for it.

While writing of our needs, may I also draw attention to the wonderful training in acting that membership of a repertory company such as ours affords. Students ambitious of the professional stage are gradually recognizing this, and several have spent a year or more with us, getting actual practical experience with a public audience. We claim with great pride Maurice Evans ("Journey's End"); Noel Hiff and Alan Wheatley of the Cambridge Festival Theatre (to say nothing of Mr. Ridge); Virginia Gordon, a New York actress; and Marjorie Manners, just gone to play the lead in "The Silent House" on tour. All of these got their practical experience of acting here.

I hope I have not trespassed too much upon your goodwill, but I feel that so often opportunities are missed on the one side, and needs left unsatisfied on the other, merely for lack of a little bringing together.

Yours sincerely,

MAUDE SCOTT,

Director

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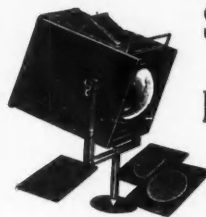
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